

CANADA'S TOP TEN FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES HOMEGROWN TALENT TIFF tours the year's best films with cross-country screenings from Vancouver to Halifax

Lineup includes works by Zacharias Kunuk, Anne Émond, Xavier Dolan and Ann Marie Fleming, plus free events and onstage conversations with Kunuk and Director X

TORONTO — TIFF® taps the nation's leading filmmakers for its **16th annual Canada's Top Ten Film Festival™** lineup, showcasing the top 10 features, shorts and student shorts for 2016. Established in 2001, the festival celebrates and promotes contemporary Canadian cinema to raise awareness of Canadian achievements in film. Running **January 13 to 26, 2017** at **TIFF Bell Lightbox** in Toronto, the expanded 14-day event presents public screenings of the selected films accompanied by introductions and Q&A sessions with directors, as well as special events and industry panels. To commemorate Canada's upcoming Sesquicentennial in 2017, the festival offers audiences free screenings and events tied to TIFF's **Canada on Screen** series which features a curated selection of classic titles from the country's rich cinematic history. Filmgoers in Toronto will once again vote to crown the Canada's Top Ten Film Festival **People's Choice Award** winner.

"Canada continues to deliver superb film talent to the world," said Cameron Bailey, TIFF's Artistic Director. "This year's Canada's Top Ten lineup ranges from British Columbia to Nunavut to Nova Scotia, telling stories that show Canadians who we are. Smart, emotional and provocative, these films showcase both world-renowned names such as Xavier Dolan and impressive newcomers like Ashley McKenzie and Johnny Ma. To open this year's Canada's Top Ten, we are honoured to present a remarkable new film by one of our most important and most influential directors working today, Zacharias Kunuk's *Maliglutit (Searchers)*."

"This year's lineup boasts a daring selection of edgy independent works from an exceptional group of directors taking serious and significant risks in their approach to filmmaking," said Steve Gravestock, Senior Programmer, TIFF. "We are truly proud to celebrate our industry's achievements with a coast-to-coast showcase of these films, bringing them to savvy audiences in 10 cities across the country."

The Canada's Top Ten Film Festival tours select films to major cities across the country including stops at **Vancouver's The Cinematheque** (January 13 to 22), **Calgary's Globe Cinema** (January 13 to 22), **Montreal's PHI Centre** (January 14 to 31), **Regina's RPL Film Theatre** (January 19 to 22), **Edmonton's Metro Cinema** (January 20 to 29), **Saskatoon's Paved Arts** in collaboration with the Roxy Theatre (January 26), **Winnipeg Film Group's Cinematheque** (March 2017), **Halifax's Atlantic Film Festival & Art Gallery of Nova Scotia** at the Windsor Foundation Lecture Theatre (May 1 to 8), and **Ottawa's National Gallery of Canada** (dates TBA).

Canada's Top Ten Film Festival features for 2016, in alphabetical order. Synopses follow below.

Angry Inuk Alethea Armaquq-Baril (National Film Board of Canada)

Hello Destroyer Kevan Funk (Northern Banner)

It's Only the End of the World (*Juste la fin du monde*) Xavier Dolan (Les Films Séville/Entertainment One)

Maliglutit (Searchers) Zacharias Kunuk (Isuma Distribution International/Vtape Distribution) **Opening Night Film**

Mean Dreams Nathan Morlando (Elevation Pictures)

Nelly Anne Émond (Les Films Séville/Entertainment One)

Old Stone (*Lao shi*) Johnny Ma (FilmsWeLike)

Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie (K-Films Amérique)
(*Ceux qui font les révolutions à moitié n'ont fait que se creuser un tombeau*)

Werewolf Ashley McKenzie (La Distributrice de Films)

Window Horses (The Poetic Persian Epiphany of Rosie Ming) Ann Marie Fleming (Mongrel Media)

TIFF is a charitable organization with a mission to transform the way people see the world, through film.



Canada's Top Ten Film Festival shorts for 2016, in alphabetical order. Synopses follow below.

Blind Vaysha (*Vaysha, l'aveugle*) Theodore Ushev (NFB)

Emma Martin Edralin

Fish Heather Young

Fluffy (*Flafi*) Lee Filipovski

Frame 394 Rich Williamson (CBC)

A Funeral for Lightning Emily Kai Bock

Her Friend Adam Ben Petrie

Mariner Thyrone Tommy

Mutants Alexandre Dostie (Travelling, les films qui voyagent)

SNIP Terril Calder

Canada's Top Ten Film Festival student shorts for 2016, in alphabetical order. Synopses follow below.

Les Beiges Étienne Lacelle (Concordia University)

Boys Will Be Teryl Brouillette (Ryerson University)

Bumby the Barely-Witch Jessica Tai (Emily Carr University of Art + Design)

Drifter Olivia Lindgren (Langara College)

Feathers Sarah Kieley (Sheridan College)

Island (SAARI) Ella Mikkola (University of Regina)

The Land of Nod Ivan Ramin Radnik (Humber College)

My Invisible Mother Pascal Huynh (Concordia University)

Nothing Grows Here Lauren Belanger (Ryerson University)

This is Not an Animation (*Ceci n'est pas une animation*) Federico Kempke (Sheridan College)

Canada's Top Ten Film Festival 2016 features panel

A national panel of seven filmmakers and industry professionals selected the best in Canadian features:

Olena Decock — outreach coordinator, REEL Canada; and programming associate, Toronto International Film Festival

Luc Déry — producer (*Incendies*, *Monsieur Lazhar*, *My Internship in Canada*)

Judy Gladstone — executive producer and film curator for SVOD and festivals

Peter Harris — film programmer, Edmonton's Metro Cinema

Anne Mackenzie — producer, creative consultant, script and book editor

Babak Payami — filmmaker (*One More Day*, *Secret Ballot*, *Manhattan Undying*)

Sudz Sutherland — writer and director (*Love, Sex and Eating the Bones*, *Doomstown*, *Shoot the Messenger*)

Canada's Top Ten Film Festival 2016 shorts panel

A national panel of five filmmakers and industry professionals selected the best in Canadian shorts:

Stacey Donen — producer and film programmer

Danis Goulet — TIFF Short Cuts programmer and filmmaker (*Barefoot*)

Ashley McKenzie — writer-director (*Werewolf*)

Blaine Thurier — filmmaker and musician (*Low Self-Esteem Girl*; *The New Pornographers*)

Ben Williams — production centre director, Winnipeg Film Group

The Canada's Top Ten Film Festival 2016 student shorts were selected by Lisa Haller (Senior Programming Associate, TIFF).

The Top Ten shorts panel will select the student shorts winners for **Best Film (Live Action)** and **Best Film (Animation)**. The filmmakers will be awarded with prize packages following the screening in January, courtesy of William F. White International Inc., Technicolor, and the Directors Guild of Canada.

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TIFF Bell Lightbox, Reitman Square, 350 King Street West, Toronto ON Canada M5V 3X5 416-599-TIFF / 1-888-599-8433

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Zacharias Kunuk and Jesse Wente in a Live Commentary on John Ford's *The Searchers* — Sunday, January 15 at 6:30 p.m.

The award-winning filmmaker sits down with Jesse Wente, TIFF's Director of Film Programmes, for a lively onstage discussion during a screening of John Ford's *The Searchers* — the film that inspired Kunuk's *Maliglutit (Searchers)*.

In Conversation With... Director X — Thursday, January 19 at 6 p.m.

The mastermind behind hit music videos like Drake's *Hotline Bling* and Rihanna's *Work* joins Cameron Bailey on stage for a career-spanning look at his work and an in-depth discussion on his creative process.

Higher Learning: Breaking Free - Stories of Isolation and Struggle — Friday, January 13 at 11 a.m. | FREE

Moderated by TIFF Short Cuts programmer Danis Goulet, this panel explores four films Canada's Top Ten selections with strong character journeys and themes of isolation and struggle: director Terri Calder (*SNIP*), director Johnny Ma (*Old Stone*), director Ashley McKenzie (*Werewolf*) and director Thyrone Tommy (*Mariner*).

Industry Forum — Friday, January 13

New this year, TIFF introduces Industry Forum, a full-day of programming tailored exclusively for film professionals. The day kicks off with a special edition of **Breakfast at TIFF**, anchored by a keynote address from Artistic Director **Cameron Bailey** that will examine the state of diversity in the Canadian screen industry. The Forum also features five sessions celebrating the standout Canadian creators, craftspeople and performers working in film and television, covering a range of topics that will include the new generation of television comedy, an exploration of activist filmmaking, a conversation with documentary visionaries, and a spotlight on cinematographers and production designers. Guest highlights include director **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril** (*Angry Inuk*), director **Matt Johnson** (*Operation Avalanche*; creator, *nirvana the band the show*), director **Jennifer Baichwal** (*Watermark*), director **Nick de Pencier** (*Black Code*), director **Hugh Gibson** (*The Stairs*), and production designer **Zosia Mackenzie** (*Mean Dreams*). Ticket packages include Breakfast at TIFF, five industry sessions and access to the festival's Opening Night Party. For more information, visit tiff.net/industry.

Canada on Screen: Film screenings and events | FREE

This year's festival presents a number of classic Canadian titles as part of TIFF's year-long programme celebrating Canada's 150th birthday. The country's rich cinematic heritage includes some of the world's most important moving-image works — from features, shorts, documentaries, animation, television, experimental works, music videos, commercials and moving-image installations. This free showcase includes two short film compilations comprised of some of the most significant avant-garde, live-action, and animated work ever produced, as well as screenings of Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell* (2012), Atom Egoyan's *Calendar* (1993) followed by his work-in-progress film *Notes For A Possible Sequel*, David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* (1988), Michel Brault's *Les Ordres* (1974), Jennifer Baichwal's *Manufactured Landscapes* (2006), Xavier Dolan's *Mommy* (2014) and Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967). Additional information about the series is available at tiff.net/canadaonscreen.

Tickets and ticket packages for Canada's Top Ten Film Festival events at TIFF Bell Lightbox go on sale **today** for TIFF Members and **December 14** for the public. Purchase tickets online at tiff.net, by phone from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET at 416.599.TIFF and 1.888.599.8433, or in person at the TIFF Bell Lightbox box office from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET. Pricing as follows: regular screening ticket is \$14 (feature film or shorts programmes); purchase the 6ix Pack for \$70 and get six tickets for the price of five; ticket to the Opening Night party and film is \$50; tickets for In Conversation With... events are \$23.75 each; Industry Forum full-day package is \$60, individual panel ticket is \$12, and Breakfast at TIFF is \$18. All Canada on Screen and Higher Learning events are free. For more information, visit tiff.net/seethenorth. TIFF prefers Visa.

In order to be eligible for the Canada's Top Ten Film Festival, the film (short or feature) must be directed by a Canadian citizen or resident, Canada must be an official country of production on the film, and the film must have been released commercially or played a major film festival in Canada in 2016.

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Canada's Top Ten Film Festival features synopses

Angry Inuk Alethea Arnaquq-Baril

Seal hunting, a critical part of Inuit life, has been controversial for a long time. Now, a new generation of Inuit, armed with social media and their own sense of humour and justice, are challenging the anti-sealing groups and bringing their own voices into the conversation. Director Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (*So!*) joins her fellow Inuit activists as they challenge outdated perceptions of Inuit and present themselves to the world as a modern people in dire need of a sustainable economy.

Hello Destroyer Kevan Funk

release date: March 3

A young junior hockey player's life is shattered by an in-game act of violence. In an instant his life is abruptly turned upside down; torn from the fraternity of the team and the coinciding position of prominence, he is cast out and ostracized from the community. As he struggles with the repercussions of the event, desperate to find a means of reconciliation and a sense of identity, his personal journey illuminates troubling systemic issues around violence. Featuring TIFF Rising Star Jared Abrahamson.

It's Only the End of the World (*Juste la fin du monde*) Xavier Dolan

After 12 years of absence, a writer goes back to his hometown, planning on announcing his upcoming death to his family. As resentment soon rewrites the course of the afternoon, fits and feuds unfold, fuelled by loneliness and doubt, while all attempts of empathy are sabotaged by people's incapacity to listen, and to love. Starring Vincent Cassel, Marion Cotillard, Gaspard Ulliel, Nathalie Baye and Léa Seydoux.

Maliglutit (Searchers) Zacharias Kunuk

release date: January 20

Nunavut, Canada circa 1913. Kuanana returns from a caribou hunt to discover his wife and daughter kidnapped, and the rest of his family slaughtered. His father's spirit helper, the loon Kallulik, sets him on course to overturn fate and reunite his family. Starring Benjamin Kunuk, Karen Ivalu and Jonah Qunaq. Co-directed by Natar Ungalaaq, the star of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*.

Mean Dreams Nathan Morlando

Mean Dreams is a tense coming-of-age thriller about a 15-year-old boy who steals a bag of drug money and runs away with the girl he loves. While her violent and corrupt cop father hunts them down, they embark on a journey that will change their lives forever. A potent fable at its heart, *Mean Dreams* fuses the desperation of life on the run with the beauty and wonder of first love. Featuring TIFF Rising Star Sophie Nélisse, Josh Wiggins, Bill Paxton and Colm Feore.

Nelly Anne Émond

release date: January 20

A film inspired by the life and work of Nelly Arcan. *Nelly* is a portrait of a fragmented woman, lost between irreconcilable identities: writer, lover, call girl, and star. Several women in one, navigating between great exaltation and great disenchantment. The film mirrors the violent life and radical work of its subject, paying tribute to a writer who insisted on taking risks. Featuring TIFF Rising Star Mylène Mackay.

Old Stone (*Lao shi*) Johnny Ma

release date: December 9

When a drunken passenger causes Lao Shi to swerve and hit a motorcyclist, the driver stops to help the injured man. When no police or ambulance arrive, he drives the victim to the hospital, checks him in, and finds himself responsible for the man's medical bills. The repercussions of Shi's selfless act expose a society rife with bone-chilling callousness and bureaucratic indifference. On the verge of losing his cab, his job, and his family, Lao Shi has to resort to desperate measures to survive. Starring Chen Gang.

Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie

release date: February 3

(*Ceux qui font les révolutions à moitié n'ont fait que se creuser un tombeau*)

Klas Batalo, Giutizia, Tumulto, and Ordine Nuovo, four twenty-somethings from Québec, reject the world in which they live. Three years after the collapse of the Maple Spring protest movement, they resort to a form of vandalism that gradually leads them closer to terrorism. But their revolutionary avant-garde is far from society's prevailing aspirations and threatens to blow up in their faces. Starring Charlotte Aubin, Laurent Bélanger, Emmanuelle Lussier-Martinez and Gabrielle Tremblay.

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Werewolf Ashley McKenzie

release date: February

Blaise and Nessa are marginalized methadone users in a small town. Each day they push their rusty lawn mower door-to-door begging to cut grass. Nessa plots an escape, while Blaise lingers closer to collapse. Tethered to each other, their getaway dreams are kept on a suffocatingly short leash. A daring first feature from Canada's most promising young directors.

Window Horses (The Poetic Persian Epiphany of Rosie Ming) Ann Marie Fleming

release date: March 10

Window Horses is a feature-length animated film about a young Canadian poet who embarks on a whirlwind voyage of discovery — of herself, her family, love, history, and the nature of poetry. Featuring the voices of Sandra Oh, Ellen Page, Don McKellar, Nancy Kwan, and Shohreh Aghdashloo, the film is filled with poems and histories created by a variety of artists and animators, who set out to blend a vast myriad of differences between cultures, philosophies, arts, and time frames.

Canada's Top Ten Film Festival shorts synopses

Blind Vaysha (*Vaysha, l'aveugle*) Theodore Ushev, Quebec

Blind Vaysha doesn't see the present. She was born with a left eye that only sees the past and a right eye that only sees the future. This story is a metaphor for the struggle to live in the moment, and how people seek comfort in memories of the past or in hope brought on by the future.

Emma Martin Edralin, Ontario

Emma, 14, has alopecia — a condition of rapid, unpredictable hair loss. Fighting a futile battle against her changing appearance, her only hope is acceptance.

Fish Heather Young, Nova Scotia/New Brunswick

A single mother navigates raising three young children while clinging to her fading relationship with their father.

Fluffy (*Flafi*) Lee Filipovski, Ontario

Boris and his family are preparing to leave his hypochondriac parents and their impossibly tiny Belgrade flat for a long-awaited new life in Canada. However, his 10-year-old daughter Ljubica has entered a contest that is about to subvert everyone's plans.

Frame 394 Rich Williamson, Ontario

Frame 394 follows a young man from Toronto who entangles himself in one of America's most high-profile police shootings.

A Funeral for Lightning Emily Kai Bock, Ontario

Seven months pregnant, a young woman is stuck living off-the-grid, under her husband's pretense of a "free life," as he pursues other ambitions.

Her Friend Adam Ben Petrie, Ontario

A boyfriend's jealous impulse spirals out of control in 16 minutes of romantic doom.

Mariner Thyrone Tommy, Ontario

A young, marine navigation student suffers intense anxiety during his final exams, when an incident from his past returns to both haunt and help him.

Mutants Alexandre Dostie, Quebec

In the summer of 1996, life throws a curveball in the face of Keven Guénette and it hits him hard. Guided by his paraplegic baseball coach, Keven discovers the mutating effects of sex and love.

SNIP Terril Calder, Ontario

SNIP cuts up colonial Canadian histories by telling a story of survival amidst genocide. Annie and Gordon travel back in time to save Charlie and Niska, who are trapped in a nightmare reality designed to eradicate native culture by erasing their children.

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Canada's Top Ten Film Festival student shorts synopses

Les Beiges Étienne Lacelle, Quebec

Shifting between striking close-ups, intimate details, and cars spinning around a race track, *Les Beiges* delicately captures the world occupied by a group of car enthusiasts in St-Eustache, Québec.

Boys Will Be Teryl Brouillette, Ontario

Reeling from the death of his father, a rebellious 18-year-old struggles with a troublesome new family dynamic. Director Teryl Brouillette emerges as a bold new voice, in this compelling drama with standout performances from Nick Serino (*Sleeping Giant*) and Steve McCarthy (*Picture Day*).

Bumby the Barely-Witch Jessica Tai Emily, British Columbia

In this playful hand-drawn animation from director Jessica Tai, a dejected student witch summons the courage to face a particularly difficult challenge and cast her spells — with unexpected results.

Drifter Olivia Lindgren, British Columbia

A bounty hunter seeks revenge on a dangerous man after narrowly escaping death, in director Olivia Lindgren's dark, ambitious, and action-filled western.

Feathers Sarah Kieley, Ontario

Beautifully captured through vibrant stop-motion animation, *Feathers* is a story of love and acceptance in which a mother and daughter struggle to cope with an unusual change.

Island (SAARI) Ella Mikkola, Saskatchewan

Director Ella Mikkola's debut film skillfully blends film, photos, and archival childhood footage to create a mesmerizing experimental video collage that explores escape and preserving memory.

The Land of Nod Ivan Ramin Radnik, Ontario

With assured direction and a clear visual style, Ivan Ramin Radnik's drama portrays a young man tormented by classmates, haunted by the dead, and consumed by the question of whether he is anything like his violent absent father.

My Invisible Mother Pascal Huynh, Quebec

In a creative mix of stop-motion animation and live-action documentary, a man recalls the social realities that forced his mother to put him up for adoption.

Nothing Grows Here Lauren Belanger, Ontario

This delightfully charming and original story about friendship and healing concerns young Rachel, who, having discovered she no longer has a heartbeat, receives little help from adults but is aided by her eager classmate Charlie.

This is Not an Animation (Ceci n'est pas une animation) Federico Kempke, Ontario

A group of pretentious animators with radically conflicting artistic visions attempt to complete a joint project, in this amusing animated mockumentary.

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About TIFF

TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world, through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit tiff.net.

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For images, visit tiff.net/press.

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